

# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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## GATES TO OPEN

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I WOULD rather help a boy to know the joy of reading and show him a few of the most interesting places that books will take him than to teach him to know the classic masterpieces or to recognize literary art. I take this stand because it has been my experience that all boys who learn the joy of reading continue to read for the rest of their lives, while it is a high estimate to say that one boy out of ten ever takes a permanent interest in the classic masterpieces or in literary art. That one boy out of ten needs no assistance in his reading anyway. It is the other nine that need help and to whom I mean to give most of my time and effort.

Boys come to me when they are nine or ten years old. They leave me when they are fourteen or fifteen. During that time they are boys, real boys, not students of top-lofty literature or candidates for college entrance. I get them to reading and then I get them to telling each other about the books they have just read. My chief function is opening gates and giving boys a chance to tell what they have found in the pastures to which the gates have admitted them. Once the boys get started talking about the books they have read, in fact, they open their own gates. I oil the hinges a bit, and suggest directions for ex-

ploration, or once in a while I caution against the undesirable. But mostly I try to leave the boys to themselves. As a result, each year boys open gates to each other entirely new to me. Some of these gates lead to barren fields. Others lead to the most fertile.

It was a boy who, twelve years or so ago, opened for me the gate to the James Willard Schultz pasture. He was ten years old, this boy, and ingenuous. I was still clinging to carefully prepared school texts, contenting myself with trying to find the most human among them. Henry smiled across the luncheon table at me engagingly.

"I wish we could read an Indian story next," he said. "I've got a fine one. Do you think we could?"

"I don't know," I said. "What kind of literature is it? It probably isn't good enough."

"Oh this is good. It's true. And it's exciting. Would you like to see it?"

Sure that the book couldn't be worthy of a place in the school room, yet not knowing how to refuse, I told Henry that I would like to see it. He brought it to me. From that time on, it has been the first book that I offer to my ten year olds. We have worn out two copies in the service, and have started on the third. The title

of the book is "With the Indians in the Rockies." James Willard Schultz wrote it. Houghton Mifflin published it. Since then it has been brought out in a gift edition. It is the first of a series of books dealing with the lives and adventures of Blackfeet Indians and certain trusted white trapper friends. It is authentic. All of Schultz's books are authentic. They are frequently based on actual fact experiences told to Schultz by the leading characters and woven into a story by him; and they always portray the Indian character faithfully and understandingly. A teacher who wants to know something of the basis of the stories should read, "My Life as an Indian," in which Schultz tells how, at seventeen, he went to Fort Benton in Montana, made friends with the Blackfeet, traveled with them, studied their customs, listened to their tales, married a fine-souled Blackfoot girl and became a member of the tribe. It was a boy who brought this book to my attention, though it is a book for grown-ups rather than boys.

It was a boy who opened the Charles G. D. Roberts gate for me, with a copy of the story, "Red Fox." We are buying our third copy of this for the boys' own library this fall. Two others have been read to tatters. Roberts knows the animals of the wilderness, and understands them, almost as Schultz understands the Indians. More than that, Roberts is a poet and a literary artist. His visualization of the beauties of forest and field and sky is keen and the imagery of his description is vivid and colorful. He has written half a dozen volumes of animal stories that are worth reading—as well as several charming novels.

It was a boy who insisted that I read "Lad, a Dog," by Albert Payson Terhune. Perhaps I should say that it was the combined, clamorous insisting of a dozen boys. I have been trying to open the Terhune gate to boys and grown-ups ever since. It is one of the most attractive gates to the dog story pasture, which is after all one of

the most delightful pastures for boys to browse in that I know. In fact it is so delightful, and at the same time so inspiring to the soul that I make it my business to carry on a sort of personally conducted tour through it once in every two years. I do this by reading aloud to the boys daily after lunch for twenty to thirty minutes.

This year I took the boys in through the Jack London gate, reading "The Call of the Wild;" the story of Buck, half collie, half St. Bernard, who was carried off to the Klondike region and learned the primitive law of club and fang and the deep-rooted pride of trace and trail; Buck, the hundred and fifty pound sledge dog who fought the devilish white leader of the team, Spitz, for mastery, who toiled day after day at the head of the mail train till they had covered four thousand miles of frozen wilderness and he was worn to skin and bone, but still pulling; Buck, who unaided broke out and started and dragged for a hundred yards a sled weighing half a ton, to win a thousand dollars for his master, who plunged three times into a freshet flooded river to save that master, and who fought and destroyed by sheer animal fury and restless strength the band of Yeehat Indians who had killed that master.

After that we read London's companion book, "White Fang," with its wolfish hero, trained and molded by bitter experience to kill all dogs and to hate all men, who comes under the influence of a love-master, and later saves the love-master's whole family from the knife of an escaped murderer, all but losing his own life in the terrible battle. Then we read "Bob, Son of Battle," with its knightly hero, Owd Bob o' Kenmuir, and its ferocious but loyal-hearted villain, Red Wull, the Tailless Tyke. Then we skipped back to the far north and read "Baldy of Nome," the true story of a racing sled dog, unfortunately not very well told, but inspiring nevertheless. Then Terhune's "Lad, a Dog," which stirred laughter and wonder and tears.

Then "Polaris," a simple, matter-of-fact, true account of an amazing husky dog, descended from Peary's favorite mother dog. Then "Prince Jan," which struck us as too sentimental. And finally John Muir's "Stikeen" in which a little mongrel strikes the highest note of pure unadulterated courage of the whole series—the episode described in Muir's simple, but vividly detailed style.

Surely the dog-story pasture is one worth opening. Where else do we find such appealingly primitive struggles combined with such stirring lessons in loyalty?

Another field that I like to see opened to my boys is the field of historical adventure stories. It has many gates. Stevenson with "The Black Arrow" and "Kidnapped" is one gate—for boys as old as twelve years. Another gate is held wide open by Howard Pyle. His "Robin Hood," "Men of Iron," "Otto of the Silver Hand," make good first tastes. John Masefield's "Jim Davis" and "Martin Hyde" are eagerly read. Conan Doyle's "The White Company" and "Sir Nigel" please many boys. A few read "Scottish Chiefs" with great absorption. "The Three Musketeers" and "Count of Monte Cristo" have a strong appeal to the older boys. Cooper's Indian stories belong in this class, rather than with Schultz's stories. Then, too, there are scores of writers like Joseph A. Altscheler, G. A. Henty, and others who put personal heroes into all the great military campaigns, to the delight of the boy reader. Scott is near the top of the list for literary value, but only the mature and facile readers can appreciate him.

Still another field that I like to see opened to boys is the field of geographical wandering. Kirk Munro makes a good opener to this field, though his books are not literary masterpieces. "Canoemates" takes boys to the Florida reefs and everglades. "Campmates" takes them to the west to lay railroads. "Rick Dale" gives

them a taste of Puget Sound smuggling, climbing Mt. Ranier, and lumbering at its base. "Derrick Sterling" takes them into a coal mine. Commander Edward L. Beach in his "Roger Paudling" series takes the boys through the Navy. Samuel Scoville Jr. packs "The Inca Emerald" full of South American Thrills, described accurately, though decidedly crowded. Charles Nordhoff gives a simple tale of pearl fishing in the South Seas, which is dependably accurate in its local color, called "The Pearl Lagoon." Francis Rolt-Wheeler has written a whole series of interesting and very instructive books about the various United States Services, such as "The Boy with the U. S. Foresters," "The Boy with the U. S. Fisheries," etc. Zane Grey has dramatized the Great West, Curwood the Northwest, both for older boys and grown-ups. There are of course dozens of others, some as good, some not as good. And then there are the much better known ones, such as Kipling, who takes ten year-olds to India in "The Jungle Books," twelve or thirteen year-olds to the Grand Banks in "Captains Courageous," and still older boys to India again in "Kim." Frank T. Bullen's "Cruise of the Cachetot" is a masterpiece, but so full of detail that only those really interested in the sea will read it. The same is true of "Two Years Before the Mast" by Richard Henry Dana. "Robinson Crusoe" and "Swiss Family Robinson" ought to be included in the list of stories for the field of geographical wandering, for though their settings are geographically vague and indefinite, they are vivid and picturesque, and instructive.

There is one last field that I like to introduce boys to, but seldom need to. That is the field of boy life under different conditions from their own. "Tom Sawyer" and "Huck Finn" open the gates and are universally popular. The "Story of a Bad Boy" is generally read with interest. "Tom Brown's School Days" is always liked when read through to the finish,

## A LETTER FOR BOOK WEEK

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MY DEAR CHILDREN:

So we talk about favorite books, do we? Well, know this. Among the wonderful things we talked of doing, when we made a home in the mountains, was this. We were going to try our hands at wood carving, and make wooden statues of favorite fictional characters, so started with Alice in Wonderland's Rabbit. But the job took so long, and the result was so unsatisfactory (looking like a kangaroo), that we changed our plans, and instead, had our dining room painted white, then, on the panelling and around the room in a sort of frieze, painted our pets in figures about ten inches high, all done very bold in bright colors. And favorite fictional characters mean favorite books, of course. So there is a kind of record, though none of us are artists like Honoré, or Falls, or a dozen others I could name, let alone Tenniel or Kate Greenaway.

Of course Alice from Wonderland, with Rabbit and the sour-faced Queen and the Mad Hatter are on the walls, Pinocchio too, with the soldiers; and Long John Silver, and Old Man Pew, though Squire Trelawney is further on, waving a hand to Paul Revere on a spirited horse, and right behind comes John Gilpin, the two riders being cheered by Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. For things are mixed up somewhat. For instance, in a group are Mr. Pickwick and Sam Weller, and Uncle Tom very black and shiny, with Legree. Then Robinson Crusoe stands under the Spreading Chestnut Tree watching the Village Blacksmith, while in the distance is a house intended to be Louisa May Alcott's, with Jo and her friends under the elms where Thoreau and Emerson sat. There is a sea-shore too, with a bright blue sea, and a tall ship in the distance supposed to signify the Mutineers. And Lorna Doone and

John Ridd stand on the sea sands hand in hand. Then comes a sandy desert with palm trees, ready for the Swiss Family Robinson, though the figures are not there yet, being hard to do and causing much discussion. But beyond that is Ivanhoe, and Quentin Durward, looking at Robin Hood and Friar Tuck engaged in cudgel play. Then comes the door leading to the music room, and on that are some of Honoré's figures from Tales from Silverlands.

After that is a little mix-up, with the Vicar of Wakefield, and Alan Breck, and Little Lord Fauntleroy leading Black Beauty, though a highwayman sits on the horse, and in the background someone has painted an inn, supposed to be the Wayside Inn, and there are rocky mountains in the distance. Next come Water Babies, with Uncle Remus looking at them; then a pond of ice with Hans Brinker.

Then comes a window, and the curtains hide a badly done Jack and the Beanstalk giant. But beyond that, in very bright colors march Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves, some kings and princesses from Grimm and Hans Andersen, a few figures from Stevenson's Child's Garden of Verses, Struwwelpeter with very porcupinish hair, and so another window. Between that and a door are the Pied Piper, Bluebeard, a few Mother Goose characters, some of the queer folk from Lear's Book of Nonsense, and Doctor Dolittle.

We wanted Mr. Fogg, who went around the world in eighty days, but he came out stiff, so was painted out. Rosamund and her Purple Jar went in that place instead. Herbert, the youngest made a Heidi in crayon. Charles tried his hand at Rider Haggard's Zulus. Kittie painted in a Becky Sharp, and Helen tried a Christian in Vanity Fair. Then Hubert pencilled

his heroes, such as David Livingstone and The Man in the Iron Mask and King Arthur and his Knights, though none of them are painted yet, the color of steel being hard to get. Nor are they all from fiction.

So there's some idea of our favorites, but some of them only, for the crowd is too great. For of winter nights we sit about the open fireplace and read aloud, and that way one gets through a whole lot of reading.

Some of the pictures are rather messy when you look close, but nevertheless it was good fun doing it all, good fun planning it too. Besides that, down by the stream and near the bridge is a play house,

with stone fireplace and real chimney where the older ones go to read in quiet sometimes. The walls of that too are painted, both inside and out, mostly figures from Dickens Pickwick Papers though.

So it needs no words to give our childhood book favorites. And if you should happen to be down in the Ozark country, give us a call. Of course the pictures may be changed by then, the more because Honoré, only yesterday, did a beautiful Jester on a door panel, which makes some of our work look pretty poor.

*CHARLES J. FINGER.*

Fayetteville, Arkansas.

## ROADS

*Arthur N. Thomas*

**T**HREE are roads that lead to cities,  
Long white roads where autos run,  
Where great clouds of dust ascending  
Turn sky-blue against the sun.  
There are throngs who feel an urging  
These hard highways to explore,  
At landmarks they thrill with pleasure—  
Then rush on in search of more.

There are roads that lead to woodlands  
Cool, dim roads where poets plod,  
Where great trees cast shimmering shadows  
On the quiet, springy sod.  
There are many souls who wander  
O'er these roads to find the rest  
Which gives music to the song-birds,  
That fly singing 'round their nest.

There are roads that lead to dreamland—  
Silvery roads of moonlit dew,  
Where a host of flitting fairies  
Play about at peek-a-boo.  
Far away through hills of jasper  
Run these pretty roads of light;  
And each one of us may walk there  
When the stars come out tonight.

## POOR CECCO GOES TO A BOOK TEA

MARGERY WILLIAMS BIANCO

New York City

**L**OOK, LOOK!" shouted Bulka. "Just look what the R. F. D. left!"

He came staggering up the garden path, between the nasturtium borders, dragging a fat white envelope nearly as big as himself.

Poor Cecco, who had been taking a nap behind the flowerpots on the front step, sat upright, wagging his wooden stump of a tail, and stared.

"Put that down, Bulka," he ordered. "Take it back at once. You know we can't touch what the R. F. D. leaves. It's for the Family."

But Bulka was so excited he wouldn't stop.

"Stop at once!" cried Poor Cecco. And he thumped his tail on the step so hard that Bulka gave a jump, and dropped the envelope on the path. Poor Cecco came running up to look at it.

"I'm sure it's for us!" said Bulka, rather sulky, for he didn't like being ordered about. "It was our own R. F. D. that brought it!"

Sure enough it was. Bulka couldn't read, but Poor Cecco could. There, all printed out on the envelope, was his name in big letters. Off they rushed behind a currant bush; Poor Cecco tore the envelope open, his paws fairly trembling with excitement, and there inside was a clean white card with printing on it.

"It's an invitail!" shouted Bulka, beginning to turn somersaults at once. "It's an invitail like the Family gets! I've seen them in the wastepaper basket!"

Poor Cecco was reading.

"You are invited to a Book Tea at the Library. . . ."

But suddenly Gladys, who was always poking round where she wasn't wanted, stuck her head round the bush.

"I saw it!" she cried. "I saw it!" And she made a dive for the letter. Poor Cecco snatched the card away from her and sat on it.

"You can't look!" he said. "It isn't for dolls."

"What is it?" Gladys teased. "You might tell me!"

"Hinksman!" said Poor Cecco.

Gladys turned away, looking very sniffy. She said "All right. Then you shan't come to our picnic!"

But Bulka and Poor Cecco didn't care. They never believed in Gladys's picnics anyway. They were busy plotting, still sitting on the precious card, with their heads together. Poor Cecco thought he ought to put his green ribbon on. Bulka decided to wear his best velvet coat, with the sky blue breeches.

"How about Tubby?" he said suddenly.

"Of course we'll take Tubby!" said Poor Cecco.

Bulka ran to find her. But Tubby was busy making currant jam. She had five red currants, and these she had put in an egg-cup, with some sugar which she had been saving up for days in her apron pocket; she had set the egg-cup in the sun on a stone, being the warmest place she could find, and was now walking round and round it, humming away very importantly to herself, and stirring it all up with a clean twig. She was quite happy and didn't want to come to the party at all.

"But you be sure and come back to supper, Bulka," she said, "because if this doesn't jell by supper-time we'll eat it anyway!"

Bulka promised.

He and Poor Cecco stole away through the side garden, by the parsnip bed, pretending they were just strolling somewhere else, in case any of the other toys should be spying on them. Each carried a bundle under his paw, and when they were safely out of sight of the house, behind a tall feathery carrot row, Bulka put on his proud velvet jacket with the braid, and his little sky-blue trousers, and Poor Cecco shook out his green ribbon, that had been carefully folded up, and tied it about his waist with a nice bowknot. Now they were really ready to start.

The Library was a little way down the hill, on the road to the village. When they reached it they found the front door shut, with a sign set just inside the glass window, saying "The Library will be closed on Wednesday." This was rather a blow, but Poor Cecco remembered that there was another little door round at the side. Perhaps that would be open. So he led the way, round through the long grass, and sure enough that door stood ajar, and through the crack they could hear a great buzzing and chattering, just like a real party going on.

"Come along!" said Poor Cecco. And he straightened his tail and gave a little pat to the green ribbon bow, to be sure it was in place.

But Bulka hung back. "I feel so shy," he whispered. "Dear Cecco, don't let's go!"

"Don't be silly!" said Poor Cecco, sternly. "It's all nonsense, Bulka. Look at your nice coat! You've nothing to be shy about!"

"Well, it makes me!" Bulka muttered. He stood shifting from one paw to another, trying to get his courage up, until Poor Cecco quite lost patience. "If you won't come," he said at last, "Then I shall go

without you, and what's more, I shall eat all the cake!"

At this dreadful threat Bulka made a great effort, and clutching bravely at Poor Cecco's paw he let himself be dragged through the doorway and into the Library.

Instantly the buzzing ceased. They found themselves surrounded by a number of very queer-looking people, nearly all of them strangers, grouped about the big room. Every eye was turned on the newcomers; even Poor Cecco felt suddenly shy, though he pretended not to show it, and as for Bulka he turned quite pale and began to whimper, so that Poor Cecco had to pinch him to make him stop. But a very nice-looking old gentleman came forward and shook hands with them.

"I'm Doctor Dolittle," he said, "and I'm so glad you've come! And now I'll introduce you to everybody."

And he hustled about, leading them here and there, and saying everyone's names, though Poor Cecco couldn't remember half of them. There was Jip the dog, and many others of Doctor Dolittle's numerous family, to begin with, and there was Raggedy Ann and the London Doll and Gimme-the-Ax and Wilbur the Hat and Puss-in-Boots and Red-Riding-Hood, and Peter Pan and Wendy, and the Velveteen Rabbit, and Pinocchio, with his nose growing longer every minute as he told his adventures to a little group of listeners. And there was a queer little person called Nicholas, who seemed to know everyone very well indeed, and there at the end of the room by a long table sat Alice, in a clean pinafore, busy pouring tea, with Bill the Lizard on one side and the Dormouse on the other, while the March Hare and the Hatter were handing cakes. And there was Maya the bee, too, and Peter Rabbit and Mrs. Tiggewinkle.

"Have a cake!" said the March Hare. "They're real cakes. Alice made them."

Bulka took a cake and bit into it, dropping the crumbs all down him, while the March Hare rolled his eyes and stared. It

was *very* crumbly cake; Bulka didn't quite know what to do with it, for he really didn't like it at all but was too shy to say so. But the Hatter came up and whispered behind his hand: "Don't eat that! Nobody likes them. I know where there's some good bread-and-butter!" And he led Bulka round behind the table, where there was a beautiful stack of bread-and-butter, cut very thin, on a blue china plate.

Tea was passed around, and Poor Cecco, who really enjoyed social life, began to feel quite cheerful and very much at home. Wilbur the Hat told some jolly stories, and Pinocchio told—well, it doesn't matter what Pinocchio told, but his nose kept growing *so* long that it was almost dangerous and they had to make him stop.

Bulka, restored by the bread-and-butter, soon made friends with everyone and was so pleased with the party that he began to turn somersaults all over the floor. While he was thus busily engaged, Poor Cecco, who had been exploring around the room, came up, and whispered to him.

"Bulka, what do you think! There's a big book here and it's written all about us!"

"Where?" cried Bulka. "Show me!"

"Sh-sh!" said Poor Cecco. And he led him around behind the bookstacks, and there was the book, open at the very page where there was a picture of Bulka himself.

"It's *all* about us!" said Poor Cecco, very excited. "Look, Bulka, here and *here*. And the pictures are right, but I've been reading and they got it all wrong about the rats, because you remember that night, Bulka, and what I really said to Jensina was—"

But Bulka was too impatient to listen. He wanted to find the picture of Tubby. "Pooh, that isn't anything!" said Raggedy Ann, who had crept up behind them. "*I'm* in a book too!"

"And *I!* and *I!*" other voices cried. "They got me all wrong too, in one place!"

"Mine's right," said the London Doll, very superior. "I wrote it all myself. But the things people will put in books—"

"They didn't tell half what I did!" interrupted Pinocchio, "Because that night I met the Fox I *never* ran away and the very next morning—"

But his nose suddenly began to shoot out so long that he stopped short, very much ashamed of himself.

"Now what does it all matter!" said Doctor Dolittle, bustling up. "We're all here and very happy and having a good time, so let people write what they like!"

Just then there was a great tapping at the door, and in came a whole host of new guests. There was a funny little boy in Indian clothes, called Skunny-Wundy, who had some fine stories to tell, and Uncle Sol from the Kentucky mountains, in his coon-skin cap, and the King of Kurio with his wife, who had arrived in their famous elongatable airship, and many others—so many that Doctor Dolittle had a difficult time learning all their names and introducing them. Now the party began in real earnest; Pinocchio made a speech, everyone danced with everyone else, and Poor Cecco had a wonderful time, while Bulka was so excited he continually stood on his head, shouting all the while "I wish Tubby was here! I do wish Tubby was here!"

But all too soon the big clock in the corner struck six; all the cake was eaten up and many of the guests were beginning to get sleepy; it was time for the party to break up. First, however, Nicholas fetched his red candle and set it on the tea-table; it was lighted, and while it was burning they must all join hands in a circle and wish.

So hand in hand, with the candlelight shining on them, they all stood very seriously, in a silence that was only broken by Peter Rabbit sneezing just at the wrong moment, and all wished just as hard as they could.

And they wished for another party, just as nice as this one, next year.

## ARTHUR CHRISMAN—NEWBERY MEDALIST

MRS. ARTHUR M. JORDAN

*Chapel Hill, N. C.*

**S**HEN of the Sea" gained for its author, Arthur Bowie Chrisman, the Newbery Medal for the most distinguished contribution to American children's literature during 1925. This is Mr. Chrisman's second book. The first was burned by the author himself before it was published, and the second—this one—received the Newbery prize.

"Shen of the Sea" holds sixteen stories. They are, on an average, twenty pages long, but the print is large, the pages small, and the illustrations plentiful and attractive. These illustrations—done silhouette fashion by Else Hassibriis—are humorous, quaint and piquant, thereby fitting the stories to a nicety.

The stories are told with a clear and simple handling of the plot. They are easy to follow, and the interest is well maintained to the end. The characters are portrayed whimsically, not grotesquely. A wealth of reference to Chinese customs and surroundings—quaint politeness of phraseology and action, odd names translated directly into English—"Two Roads Meet Village," "The Street of Wang's Broken Tea Cup,"—all keep the children imbued with the proper atmosphere and add not a little to their amusement.

A "wise and well spoken" Chinese grocer told Mr. Chrisman the stories he has set down in this book. They are folk stories of China, and as such are of childish calibre. They were formulated in the so dim and distant past when all men thought as children, because there did not exist the immense collection of knowledge all neatly canned in books which modern men can swallow whole, so to speak, and at once rise to an advanced plane of thought.

There was not in those days the great gap between the subject matter of grown-up and of childish thought which exists today. But original nature is much the same, and because of that there is a background of experience in our children's minds which allows them to appreciate the pranks of these ancient little orientals. Ah-Mee, who "always does what he is told not to do, but in such a manner as to leave a loophole for escape," Ah Tzu, who though asked to do a number of seemingly senseless acts, some even at great inconvenience to himself, does them because they are ordered by one in authority, and an "order is an order, to be obeyed"—Little America feels a fellow sympathy for them.

These stories illustrate the remarkable similarity which exists in the folk lore of unrelated peoples. The story of the boy and the wolf, which is known best in the form transcribed by Aesop, is repeated with variations in "How Wise Were the Old Men." The principle which Joshua used when he took the city was utilized by the Four Generals, in the story of that name, when they out-thought a numerous but simple minded enemy. In the same tale comes the story of the Good Samaritan—Wang the tailor posing as the Samaritan—and so instances might be multiplied.

But perhaps the outstanding characteristic of the handling of these stories is the humor the author creates by understating the serious situations, and overstating the obvious. Six-year old America, however, gets none of it. Some passes over the head of Eleven-Years. But the reading-out-loud adult is charmed by all of it. Although the children may miss some of the

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## OUR DISCRIMINATING YOUNG

WALTER YUST

Associate Editor, *The Literary Review, New York Evening Post*

IT MAY be I presume too much, venturing, as I do, any answer to a question in "children's tastes in reading," any characterization of books children might read with deepest pleasure were an armful before them for their own choosing. These many years, I have suggested books for the pleasure of children; for the past two I have observed the growing interest of my daughter in books; and I have not entirely forgotten my own early delights. In addition to this, I have read literally hundreds of book reviews written by children, expressing their own reactions to current juveniles. . . . I could never, however, venture with any deep conviction of certainty, to generalize upon the book tastes of children, unless it be to say that they enjoy books which pull them into a vivid approximation of life.

Five years ago, W. Orton Tewson, editor of *The Literary Review* and of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger* book pages gave children an opportunity to declare publicly whatever they thought about books published for them. It was a new idea, and children responded with enthusiasm. Since 1921, to the *Ledger*, and for the last two years to *The Literary Review*, children have contributed reviews during the period of Children's Book Week up until Christmas.

These reviews, entirely the thought and work of children, are often droll. But they are significant more especially for gravity and candor. Having read them, I have come to only one conclusion in many, which moves me to tears.

It would seem we have taught our youngsters that a book to be "good" must "teach something." How many reviews there are

the burden of whose testimony is "I like this book because it teaches me to be courageous" or "I like this book because it teaches us to do things for those who do things for you." (The poor child learned his lesson none too well.) Whatever the virtue of the teaching, books are of questionable value when they set out to teach—and, of course, I am thinking of books for children in the sense of novels and volumes of poetry for adults. It is to be supposed that any image entering richly into the consciousness of a child will contribute toward the development of the child. But children need never pick up a book to hunt for such development. And, unguided, they rarely do. "I don't like the book because it is too short" is the expression of taste I can most heartily endorse; and "you feel full of adventures when you read it" is another; and I welcome them because they denote a refreshing, whole-hearted interest and pleasure in a book which has no more aim than to give pleasure. If books are meant to teach anything which can be named, it is doubtless to encourage a love for other books.

Children are characteristically, as the red jacketed Private Willis sings, born either liberal or conservative. They enjoy whatever they know; or they are keen to knock about in the unknown. And one discovers the kind of books children wish to read after one sweeps away from their minds that self-consciousness which prevents a free expression of inclination and which settles down upon them if they have been drilled to accept books adults wish them to read. When children's desires come clean and untampered with, they enjoy whatever

their minds are capable of understanding. They "like" adventure, they "like" conflict, they "like" illustrations; they are acutely sensitive to dishonesty and insincerity and will not tolerate books "written down" to them.

This is very apparent in the echo and reecho of a criticism of a child of twelve: "Personally, I do not like the book because it is too young for me. I read much older books." Whatever seems absurd, you see, is "too young." The mind of youth is innocent enough to consider age the measure of all taste, intelligence and aptitudes. (Once-upon a time, I believed as much myself. But as I grow older I modify the notion—so that today I am likely to find more intelligence, taste, and, shall I say, culture, in a "young book" than in a host of "older books.") And this unwillingness to accept "young books" may be another indication of adult influence—it is only the unspoiled mind or the mind mellowed by experience which can enjoy any good book whether it is intended for young or old. Nonetheless, it is only the *inferior* book (or the book with a jacket note declaring its appeal for special ages) which will not be read with pleasure, no matter what the age. And I may say that a bold designation on its jacket of the age-limits of a book is a disservice to both child reader and adult buyer.

"It is an art," one of these fifteen-year-old boy reviewers writes in his appraisal of a Hugh Lofting Book, "to leave the beaten path of sensible writing and still have sensible people read your book because they know it is nonsense." A circumlocution which implies the truth I have been trying to emphasize. It is an art—the lack of which fresh minds of children invariably detect.

They do not wish artless nonsense. Those who like fairies, need honest credible fairies. If they want a book on woodcraft they ask for twigs and trees and indentifications they can lay their hands to. If they wish adventure—and so many of them

do—they ask for the simplicities of conflict, unequivocal emotions, swift movement. If they are girls and in their teens, they want Princes and other romantic lovers who are not "silly." If they are very young, they want animals, animals and more animals. For instruction in behavior, deportment, history, sewing, cooking, they, willingly or unwillingly, go to school.

We do so seldom understand the amazing capabilities of children. Their sensibility is, for me, a matter of ever renewed astonishment and of appalling obligation. With jealous care must they be guided in order that they may develop without oppression from unsympathetic adult minds which can credit early youth and its unplumbed capacities with only the most meagre accomplishment; which can deny, say, the creative and receptive abilities of a Nathalia Crane because other children do not write poems! (One incredible adult poet denied Nathalia's authentic right to her creations because he "couldn't write poems like that" when he was a child!)

Here are rich vigorous minds; potential treasure houses, illimitable because they are young. Without consciously, it may be, knowing what they want, they know instinctively. (It is my pet theory.) They will read, as I signified earlier, and enjoy whatever lifts them to an approximation of the stirring, fascinating life which tumbles about them. They seek no release from what is wearisome; they crave for no escape as cynic, tired, adults do. They look for new adventuring, even as they are eye-bright for it, once around the corner into the unfamiliar street. They are explorers and they must find the glamor of gold and no alloy. . . .

I shall always remember the quaint honesty of a thirteen year old. The book was sugarcoated instruction, until the close when the author himself was caught up into the rush of life and action he gave his characters. He had been writing down to

## READ-AT-HOME WEEK\*

### A BOOK-WEEK ACTIVITY

PEOPLE NEED BOOKS, but they don't know they need them," contends the proprietor of "The Haunted Bookshop," who believes that all things may be accomplished by reading. To make reading more widespread, Good Book Week, and its juvenile corollary, Children's Book Week, were organized and have been carried on for a number of years with faithfulness and enthusiasm. Teachers have launched drives in the schoolrooms for better books and wider reading and have met with some success. It remains to turn effort toward the homes from which children come.

The object of the particular undertaking outlined here, is to have every family devote an hour, or at least a half-hour, every evening during Book Week to reading aloud. This ideal will not, of course, be attained. But by careful publicity through newspapers, meetings of Parent Teachers Associations, Mothers' Clubs, and of course by school room publicity and enthusiasm, a new attitude toward books may be created in many homes.

At the meeting of the Parent Teachers Association just previous to Book Week, a teacher of English, or a librarian, may very appropriately talk on children's literature. It should be her purpose, in this talk, to secure the support of parents in the scheme of reading aloud every evening during Book Week. It may be explained to the parents that children will be asked to report in school on the books thus read. If the teacher illustrates her talk with attractive books, well printed and artistically illustrated, and gives résumés of two or three outstanding new books, such a dis-

cussion is bound to be interesting to parents. The speaker should emphasize, above everything else, books for home reading, and especially stories which may enjoyably be read aloud to the whole family in the evening.

It is essential to the success of such a campaign that the speaker have a list of books that may be enjoyed by the entire family. The list is not as hard to compile as would at first appear. A suggested compilation, which teachers and librarians can easily better and enlarge, is given here.

#### BOOKS AND STORIES THAT EVERYONE WILL ENJOY

##### ANIMAL STORIES

- Brown, John—*Rab and His Friends*—Dodge  
Kipling, Rudyard—*Moti-Guj—Mutineer* (in “Life’s Handicap”)—Doubleday  
London, Jack—*The Call of the Wild*—Macmillan  
Muir, John—*Stikeen*—Houghton  
Mukerji, Dhan Gopal—*Kari, the Elephant*—Dutton  
Utter, Robert Palfry—*The Pup Dog* (in “Pearls and Pepper”)—Yale University

##### BAD BOY STORIES

- Henry, O.—*The Ransom of the Red Chief* (in “Whirligigs”)—Doubleday  
Kipling, Rudyard—*Stalky and Company*—Doubleday  
Twain, Mark—*Huckleberry Finn*—Harper  
Twain, Mark—*Tom Sawyer*—Harper

##### ADVENTURE

- Defoe, Daniel—*Robinson Crusoe* (exciting portions)—Boni, Liveright  
Hawes, Charles Boardman—*The Mutineers*—Atlantic (Little, Brown)  
Melyville, Herman—*Moby Dick* (exciting portions)—Macmillan  
Noyes, Alfred—*The Highwayman* (Poem. In Burton E. Stevenson, “The Home Book of Verse”—Holt; and also in V. H. Collins, “Poems of Action”—Oxford University Press)

\* Grateful acknowledgment is made to Mrs. Emma M. Stanley, of Louisville, Ky., who suggested the project outlined here.

## MISCELLANEOUS

- Daudet, Alphonse—*The Pope's Mule* (translation in "The Little Library")—Macmillan  
 Edwards, Henry Stillwell—*Eneas Africanus*—J. W. Burke  
 Roosevelt, Theodore—*Letters to his Children* (portions)—Scribners

## BOOKS FOR LITTLE CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS

- Bianco, Margery Williams—*The Little Wooden Doll*—Macmillan ("The Little Library")  
 Bianco, Margery Williams—*Poor Cecco*—Doran  
 Bianco, Margery Williams—*The Velveteen Rabbit*—Doran  
 Chrismán, Arthur—*Shen of the Sea*—Dutton  
 Dodge, Mary Mapes—*Hans Brinker*—Jacobs  
 Horne, Richard Henry—*Penguin Island*—Macmillan ("The Little Library")  
 Kipling, Rudyard—*Jungle Books*—Doubleday  
 Lofting, Hugh—*Dr. Dolittle*—Stokes  
 Lofting, Hugh—*Dr. Dolittle's Circus*—Stokes  
 Lofting, Hugh—*Dr. Dolittle's Voyage*—Stokes  
 Lofting, Hugh—*Dr. Dolittle's Zoo*—Stokes  
 Milne, A. A.—*Once On a Time* (a fairy story)—Putnam  
 Milne, A. A.—*When We Were Very Young* (poems)—Dutton  
 Spyri, Johanna—*Heidi*—McKay  
 Untermyer, Louis, trans.—*The Cat*—Harcourt

The speaker should, if possible, have the list of recommended titles mimeographed, and distribute it to the parents at the meet-

ing. If each title of the list is followed by a notation, telling where the book can be borrowed or purchased, and how much it costs, the list will be of still greater benefit.

Within the school room the children will of course discuss Book Week and books. The object of the week should be carefully explained, and the children given a chance to make their own suggestions.

Children may themselves compile a list of books suitable for reading aloud at home. They may write short letters to one another's parents, explaining the object of the campaign, and asking that mothers or fathers plan to read aloud to their children every evening during Book Week.

The teacher may discuss with the class means of getting books to read aloud. The question of library cards arises immediately, and an incidental campaign for library-card ownership may be conducted.

Various interesting checks on home reading may be devised. One of the simplest is to have daily reports by the children on their reading the evening before. The usual Book Week posters may emphasize the "Read-at-Home" idea, and votes on favorite books, and contests in designing personal book-plates can be made to supplement the main idea of the week.

## GATES TO OPEN

(Continued from page 245)

though its slow beginning damns it for many boys. "Master Skylark" is enjoyed by a select few. "Hans Brinker" has its appreciative readers. "Oliver Twist" grips quite a number.

And now I am at the end of my space, with much unsaid that would like to come out, many smaller fields or divisions of big fields clamoring for notice, many individual books unmentioned that really ought to be mentioned—such as "Treasure Is-

land," "Lorna Doone," "Mysterious Island," "Wild Animals I have Known," and dozens of others. All I can hope for is that what I have said may prove suggestive, and that what I have failed to say may be forgiven. But most of all I hope that my conception of the literature teacher as a *gate-opener before everything else* may find some favor with those who have followed me through these informal wanderings.

## BOOK WEEK SUGGESTIONS\*

### Dramatization

1. A selected play, relating to Book Week, may be produced by pupils under the direction of the English or auditorium teacher.

2. A Book Week play can be written and produced by the children themselves under the direction of an English or auditorium teacher.

The Library Club, or Library Round Table may present some of their activities in the form of a playlet. The scene is an informal meeting of the club. The stage is set with table, chairs, pictures, pillows, flowers, books, and, if desired, a screen for lantern slides. The pupils' own names may be used, and the teachers' names as well. It is well to mention, in the dialogue, each department, and every club and organization in the school. The speeches are informal, but none the less carefully worked out. The movie of "Robin Hood" (or some other recent picture based upon a literary classic) may be discussed, and compared with the actual story. Facts regarding the habits and appearance of birds or animals may be given. If Indian blankets, baskets, or bead-work, or similar examples of the handcraft of little known people, are brought into the play, the actors may tell of books describing the life, handcraft, and customs of these people. All the ideas should lead back to the library, where the information was obtained, and constant reference should be made, in the dialogue, to the fact that all of this information was found in books.

The informality of such a playlet necessitates as careful preparation as any other type of play.

\* These suggestions are compiled from activities outlined by members of Mr. Certain's classes at the University of Wisconsin Summer School, 1926, and by students at the Wisconsin Library Summer School, 1926.

3. Charades of book titles and favorite book characters may form a part of the auditorium activities during Book Week.

4. Dramatization of scenes from favorite books is of interest to children.

### Book Lists

1. Children make lists of books they have read. These lists are checked to determine how many read certain titles (Tom Sawyer, for example) and which child has read the most books, which the best books, etc. A chart of the findings is made on the blackboard.

2. Children consult book reviews (International Book Review, The Bookman, and educational periodicals, such as The Elementary English Review) for titles of books they think appropriate for their school library. These titles are listed, and if possible, the reviews of the books are read or at least noted in connection with each title. A vote is taken for the titles children would most like to see in the school library. If feasible, these books should be purchased.

3. Children compile lists of books suitable for Christmas gifts stating, in each case, which particular friend or relative the book would suit.

4. Lists of books for gifts, which have been prepared by the children, may be mimeographed, and distributed at Parent-Teacher Meetings.

### Book Reviews and Advertisements

1. "The Best Book I Ever Read" may be given as an assignment for a book review. The child should tell exactly why he considered the book he chose the best he had read.

2. Children review books orally, telling enough of the story to arouse the interest of other pupils. These oral

reviews may take the form of "sales talks." The object is to interest other children so much that they will read the book "advertised."

3. Advertisements for favorite books may be written. A variation is based upon moving picture advertising. Children "feature" the "stars" of the book, in writing their advertisements, describe the setting, and write captions which suggest the plot.

#### *Libraries*

1. The school librarian, or the public librarian visits the classrooms, and talks to the pupils about Book Week.

2. A drive may be conducted for 100% ownership of library cards.

3. Conducted visits to the public library and to branch libraries are arranged.

#### *Reading Aloud*

1. The best oral readers are selected, and arrangements made for them to visit hospital wards and read to the children. The English classes should carefully select the stories which are to be read to the sick children.

#### *Miscellaneous*

1. Sand tables may be used to illustrate the settings of favorite books. For

example, a Chinese village may be worked out to arouse interest in "Shen of the Sea" and an Indian pueblo, for "Chi-Wee." A small poster on the sand table gives the name of the book thus illustrated, and the author.

2. Children may choose the name of some favorite book character, and assume that name for the week.

#### *Contests*

1. A Book Week Poster contest may be instituted, with a book for first prize. Prizes, and honorable mention, should be announced in the school paper, and in the local city papers as well.

2. A contest in designing book-plates has succeeded in arousing interest in schools. As in the poster contest, publicity should be given the winners.

#### *Exhibits*

1. The results of any contests conducted for Book Week—posters or book-plates may be exhibited.

2. A display of illustrated books can be arranged with the coöperation of the public library, and of local book-stores.

3. The best-loved books from the children's own libraries will form an interesting exhibit. A small card, clipped to each book, should state that it is loaned for the exhibit by such and such a pupil.

## OUR DISCRIMINATING YOUNG

(Continued from page 253)

the boy, and dipped himself below the level of his reader; but, toward the end, he rose again and became, imaginatively and emotionally, boy. Our reviewer detected this, and wrote:

"I did not like this book until the last few chapters, because there was not enough

life in it. In the front of the book is just described bugs and snakes who are called bushmasters. The last few chapters become interesting because they have some life in them. The life, in the last few chapters, was when the professor and his friends were shipwrecked."

## CHILDREN'S POETRY

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MIRIAM BLANTON HUBER

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EDUCATION must prepare for practical living; but somewhere in the educational program is there not room for more intangible things, sources from which the spirit and imagination may be fed? Though the necessities of practical demands must be met, a school program seems difficult of defense that has

"No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance."

The most accessible of all the arts, the medium through which things beautiful may be glimpsed most easily is distorted by analysis. Poetry, that should be a joyous experience, is made dull and distasteful. Such disappointments, however, seem almost unavoidable with the materials in poetry available in many of the present textbooks and courses of study.

A growing doubt of the ability of adults to select poetry that can function with meaning in the lives of children led the writer and Dr. Herbert B. Bruner of Teachers College, Columbia University, with the assistance of Mr. Charles Madison Curry, formerly of the Indiana State Normal School, to go directly to a large number of children to find out what poetry they really like. This was done through a scientific experiment extending over the last two years, in which 50,000 children, with the help of 1500 teachers, built a curriculum of poetry for the nine grades of the elementary and junior high schools.

In all fields of education objective evidence has displaced rule-of-thumb methods. Literature and its appreciation have longest resisted the application of objective

measurement. It has been thought that the satisfaction arising from enjoyment of poetry was too subtle for measurement in any form. In fact there has even been sentiment that regarded such an attempt as an invasion of sacred territory. This attitude on the part of teachers and writers of poetry explains in a large measure the comparatively little progress made in this field by those who would apply science to education.

Accompanying the test and measurement movement of the last decade or so, another has arisen—a renewed plea for the place of interest in education. Dewey and Kilpatrick have written of the value of whole hearted and interested activity, and Thorndike has pointed out that satisfactions in learning are as important as repetitions.

While realizing that it may not be possible or desirable to measure the feeling and emotion engendered by poetry, it has seemed without question to be profitable to determine children's interests in poetry. Previous studies in this field have shown that children's judgments in literature can be carefully and reasonably made.

The first step in the investigation was to determine the poems now considered as most appropriate for children, for even the most radical advocates of the natural development theory in education admit children need some guidance. The preparation of the preliminary lists of poems was accomplished in two ways: (1) by a study of present practice in the teaching of poetry as shown by courses of study and textbooks; (2) by consideration of the opinion of experts in children's reading.

The resources of the Bureau of Curriculum Research, Teachers College, Columbia University, facilitated the first step. In this bureau were available practically all the published courses of study in America. Work by graduate students in this bureau resulted in criteria for judging courses of study, so that the thirty courses in literature ranking highest in curriculum merit in each grade, I to IX inclusive, were selected. These courses were tabulated for their poetry content. The wide range of communities represented may be suggested by the presence of Hawaii, Connecticut, Michigan, and Texas. An equal number of textbooks were selected and analyzed. The opinions of recognized leaders in children's literature dictated an additional third of the material; the latter consisting largely of modern verse and poetry not previously used in textbooks.

Approximately 100 poems were selected for each grade. Through the coöperation of Rand McNally and Company it was possible to publish these poems in experimental booklets that were furnished without cost to each of the 50,000 children taking part in the experiment. Since both the opinion of experts and examination of courses of study indicated that certain poems might be used with appropriateness in more than one grade, several poems appeared in more than one booklet.

The procedure of experimentation was carefully worked out so that each booklet of poems was used over a range of five grades. Experimental centers were established in eleven cities and towns, geographically distributed: Seattle, Wash., Boise, Idaho, Houston, Tex., Hutchinson, Kan., Okmulgee, Okla., Kansas City, Mo., Gary, Ind., Louisville, Ky., Atlanta, Ga., Charlotte, N. C., and Fall River, Mass. In each center a director was in charge, an assistant superintendent or supervisor, and the carrying out of the experiment was featured in the administrative program.

In general the plan of experimentation consisted of having the pupil come in contact with a certain number of poems and checking up to see which of these poems he liked best and least. Twelve definite reactions from each child were recorded. Though limited by his classmates and teacher in the selection of each group of poems to be studied and originally by the body of material offered, each child made his judgments as a personal matter. It was the intention of the experiment that these judgments be made in actual school life situations. A manual was furnished each teacher containing suggestions for teaching poetry, including several complete lessons, but of such a variety they could not form a specific method. The results are a composite of teacher and pupil judgments. The large number of cases involved checked any constant tendency toward error.

After the results of the twelve choices made by each of the 50,000 children were recorded these data were treated statistically so that each poem received a score comparable to the score received by every other poem in the experiment. The order in which the poems in each grade were liked was determined and the grade in which each poem was liked most. Each group of poems thought by present practice to be suitable for a certain grade was so rotated that it was used by large numbers of children in five different grades. This fact and the large number of overlapping poems as well as the representative and large number of pupils indicate that the results are conclusive.

Out of the 573 different poems used in the experiment, 38 received scores so low in all the grades in which they were used that they may be said to form a "black list" in children's regard. The rejected poems are:

## REJECTED POEMS

<i>Poem</i>	<i>Author</i>
Alexander's Feast	John Dryden
Answer to a Child's Question	Samuel Taylor Coleridge
Ariel's Song	William Shakespeare
A Wet Sheet and a Flowing Sea	Allan Cunningham
The Bivouac of the Dead	Theodore O'Hara
Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind	William Shakespeare
The Canal	Dana Burnet
Cargoes	John Masefield
Curlilocks	Mother Goose
Dandelion	Vachel Lindsay
The Destruction of Sennacherib	Lord Byron
Down to Sleep	Helen Hunt Jackson
The Eagle	Alfred Tennyson
The Fatherland	James Russell Lowell
Fern Song	James Banister Tabb
The Finding of the Lyre	James Russell Lowell
Forbearance	Ralph Waldo Emerson
The Frost Spirit	John Greenleaf Whittier
God Give Us Men	Josiah Gilbert Holland
Green Things Growing	Dina Maria Craik
Under the Greenwood Tree	William Shakespeare
Hark, Hark, the Lark	William Collins
How Sleep the Brave	Sir Walter Scott
Hunting Song	William Butler Yeats
The Lake Isle of Innisfree	Walter de la Mare
The Little Bird	Hamlin Garland
The Mountains Are a Lonely Folk	Alice Cary
November	John Keats
The Grasshopper and the Cricket	Paul Scott Mowrer
Order	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
The Poet and His Songs	The Bible
Psalm 103	James Whitcomb Riley
A Song	Joseph Addison
The Spacious Firmament	John Keats
Sweet Peas	Wilhelmina Seegmiller
Twink, Twink	Arthur Hugh Clough
Where Lies the Land	Christina R. Rossetti
Wrens and Robins	

It is highly diverting to speculate why children will not tolerate these poems, but at best it is only speculation. Countless factors of conditioning are at work in the life of every individual, innumerable influences upon taste. That the experiences of great numbers of children have elements in common seems possible. It even seems probable that certain of these poems carry connotations to children that make them exceedingly distasteful. It is here, however, that the analysis of an adult is likely to go astray. It may be that the element

of greatest consequence to the child is entirely overlooked by the adult. It seems safe to say that some of these poems are too mature for children and belong in the senior high school, some would be difficult of defense anywhere. So much imitation has operated in the selection of poetry for children, that the inclusion of a poem from somebody's chance opinion has resulted in its becoming fixed in usage with little consideration of its content. It appears that we are in danger from the same practice in very recent verse. Because Mr. Mase-

field's "Cargoes," "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" from William Butler Yeats, or Hamlin Garland's "The Mountains Are a Lonely Folk" are beautiful poems in adult opinion does not necessarily fit them for enjoyment by children.

In contrast to those poems consistently rejected by children throughout the experiment are the following overwhelming favorites in the order of their popularity together with the grade in which they have the greatest interest:

## POEMS OF HIGHEST SCORES

Poem	Author	Grade
The Raggedy Man	James Whitecomb Riley	II
Kentucky Babe	Richard Henry Buck	II
Little Orphant Annie	James Whitecomb Riley	V
The Leak in the Dike	Phoebe Carey	V
Darius Green and His Flying Machine	John Townsend Trowbridge	VII
Somebody's Mother	Unknown	VI
Robin Hood and Little John	Unknown	V
Out to Old Aunt Mary's	James Whitecomb Riley	VI
Our Flag	Lydia A. C. Ward	II
Lullaby	Paul Lawrence Dunbar	II
Paul Revere's Ride	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	V
Hiawatha's Childhood	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	II
A Nautical Ballad	Charles Edward Carryl	VI
Cradle Hymn	Martin Luther	II
The Woodpecker	Elizabeth M. Roberts	I
The House with Nobody in It	Joyce Kilmer	VI
The Leap of Roushan Beg	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	VII
In School Days	John Greenleaf Whittier	VIII

(To be concluded in November)

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## SONG

*Arthur N. Thomas*

O H, I HAVE sung with the oriole  
High on a leafy limb,  
I've flung my heated, singing soul  
Against the sky with him.

With mighty eagles I have sailed  
Upon the moaning wind,  
I've soared up where the blue mists paled  
The fields where rivers bend.

And I have shone as the full moon shines,  
That roves the clear sky-way,  
I've peeped down through the high, dark  
pines  
On rabbits at their play.

And so I've been a tree, a spring,  
A cloud, a meadow green,  
I've lived the life of everything  
That I have heard or seen.

## EXPERIENCES TO TALK AND WRITE ABOUT

INA H. HILL\*

### EXPERIENCE—A GOAL OF EDUCATION

**E**XPERIENCE is the essence of living. Without it the veriest ancient is but a child in swaddling clothes—he has had life but not living. Sympathy, understanding, knowledge of the world, traits that make for civic usefulness and point toward a mellow old age all grow out of experience. The most backward nation is that whose common people have had the fewest experiences that quicken the spirit and stir the imagination. The least useful citizen is he who has had life but has withdrawn from living.

In the days of that supreme quickening of the spirit, the Renaissance, men's minds were so keenly alive and their imaginations so active that no diversity of knowledge was too great to draw their attention. Sculptor, painter, engineer, bridge builder—all might be embodied in one man. But now that the sum of the world's knowledge is so great, such scattering of one's energies is no longer possible. Indeed, we have gone to the other extreme and too many are now content with the minimum of knowledge to perform their work and with very little more to enrich their leisure time.

Then the question arises—how to add to the store of one's knowledge in these days of keen competition? Fortunately, experience need not be actual only, to broaden the viewpoint and increase the understanding. To the alert mind much is learned vicariously from literature, music, art and drama—the more pleasurable because they

may be enjoyed in one's leisure hours. Of course for the inexperienced and for children such enjoyment is a goal to be reached by gradual ascent from simple forms of these arts. Indeed, no person listening to fine music for the first time could hope to understand all the shades of meaning in a Beethoven symphony. But enjoyment of the best is a goal worth setting and striving to attain.

Such a goal every true teacher sets for the pupils under her care. To broaden a child's understanding, arouse his sympathies, foster unselfishness and develop leadership is to enrich his life. A student of children knows that they are not selfish, unsympathetic, cruel and rude from design, but rather poverty of experience. Selfishness is most noticeable in those who have never been taught to share their possessions and lack of sympathy in those who have not suffered the hurt themselves. The wise teacher knows that she must take her pupils at the stage of development in which she finds them and build a broader and more useful structure upon that foundation. But where shall she begin? And what have been the experiences of these children before they came to her?

### THE INTERESTS OF CHILDREN

Admittedly each child is an individual with a personality characteristic of himself alone. The sooner each teacher becomes acquainted with that personality the sooner will she be able to give real assistance in his development. On the other hand, in apparent contradiction, all children of a given age group and locality are admittedly very much alike in their interests and experiences. And it is this latter

\* The author wishes to acknowledge with thanks the use of suggestive material contained in the class papers of Misses Josephine L. Abel, Edith Carey, Mary E. Hanna, Jessie Kyle, Pearl M. Lewis, and Mrs. Emma M. Stanley submitted to Professor C. C. Certain in the 1926 summer session of the University of Wisconsin.

fact which guides the teacher in her groping toward acquaintance with the individual. Psychology tells us that in the mass, children of different age levels have certain characteristics. An appeal to these characteristics automatically arouses a response, dependent upon the child's experiences and the intensity of his instincts.

Let us consider children's interests in a single subject—oral and written language—from the fifth grade through the eighth. What would they themselves choose to discuss and what would give them pleasure to write? At least they should not be sentenced to consider experiences outside their natural interests, as many an adult has been sentenced in dull lectures. They are intensely interested in sports, games where teamwork is strong, in the making of collections, pets, younger brothers and sisters, in stories of adventure, pirates, Indians, knights and detectives, in dramatization and action of all kinds, in puzzles, puns and humorous twists of language, in nature and in local activities such as road building, construction work, etc. The spirit of rivalry, imitation and display for approval is strong. There is scarcely a boy who does not belong to a gang, nor a girl who does not help form a club.

#### THE BASIS OF VITAL EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL WORK

From this wealth of material it should be easy for the teacher to select projects that will give real pleasure to children and at the same time develop in them enriched vocabulary, improved powers of discrimination, a greater social consciousness, broader vicarious experiences as well as mastery of technique. To do this each lesson should have a real reason for being, with either a pleasurable end in view or a definite step toward mastery of technique. By its close the lesson should serve as part of a program, an item in the school paper, some instruction to one or more groups in the room, assistance for the safety league or student council, help for children in a lower grade, letters to sick classmates, an

invitation to view an exhibit or take part in a contest or any one of a host of other plans. Further, in order to use the dormant abilities of children of this age, each lesson should call forth oral and written discussion; group work upon a selected phase of the subject; comparison of the study within the group and with other groups; helpful criticism; weighing and selecting of the best; correction of their own work and finally presentation of the finished efforts. The objection arises that such projects consume much time. Granted, but in the doing, qualities of citizenship are being strengthened. That in itself is an aim of every teacher.

#### SPORTS, CONTESTS AND GAMES

Let us now consider some of these interests at greater length and see what types of lessons they may foster. In the field of sports, for instance, no matter whether it be soccer, baseball or marbles, it is nearly always practical to draw up the rules of the game. This is a benefit to children unfamiliar with the sport, explain boy's games to girls and vice versa, and set up the standard for settling any disputes that may arise on the playing field. Or the lesson may take the form of a challenge to another group in the room, in their own building, or in some other building. It may end in publishing the results in the school paper or in the auditorium and also by sending a note to the opponents expressing enjoyment of the contest. Again the work may develop into a series of instructions as to how to make a kite or toy yacht to be used in a contest, these instructions to be embodied in the rules. Or the children may explain how to play some group game to be used either as language drill or on the playground. These children also enjoy telling about Boy Scout and Camp Fire Girl or Girl Reserve hikes and picnics. Rules for the good camper might be drawn up and published in the school paper. In every case the teacher should stress the spirit of fair play, good sportsmanship,

qualities of a good loser and a good winner, and so develop the social consciousness that the class will tolerate nothing but fair play.

#### COLLECTIONS

Almost all children make collections of one kind or another. It may be one of stamps, butterflies and moths, shells or stones, but as a rule it is generally aimless, unorganized and of little value to any but that particular child. Encourage each to bring his or her collection to school and there help them to organize their material and find out about the people appearing on the face of the stamps (who they were and why they should be so honored) and the significance of the other designs used by foreign countries. Or let them discover that in the ordinary conch shell which is often used as a mantle ornament or door stop, there once lived an animal with a keen sense of smell and strong eyesight, which leaped along on one foot and could even turn somersaults. Introduce new projects calling for the making of collections such as samples of wood with their leaves and bark; wool, cotton and silk in various stages of development and their manufactured products; by-products of various industries; spring birds appearing in that locality, etc. Throughout, encourage group discussion, evaluation of the merits of certain parts of any given collection, pride in ownership and respect for the property of others. Respect for public property, especially that neighboring on the school grounds, might be smuggled into some of these lessons also. Help the children to form their own opinions on the subject and to adhere to them so long as they are reasonable.

#### PETS

Stories of pet dog, cats, horses and wild animals that have been tamed call forth an enthusiastic response. Such discussions include the care, usefulness, tricks, bravery and intelligence of these pets. Here again, one should try to develop a social consciousness that will demand kindness for ani-

mals. Some of the stories might be made into booklets for the children in lower grades to read or be sent to children's hospitals. At Christmas time suggestions might be made for tying suet and other foods to worn out Christmas trees. Visits to the zoo and the circus would also lead to excellent oral discussions.

#### BOOKS AND READING

Children of this age have a great fondness for reading, but they demand stories of adventure: knights, pirates, Indians. The boys want action, bravery, daring, while the girls look for romance, self-sacrifice and loyalty. Here is an opportunity to introduce books and pictures that bring out such qualities in their best aspects. Children of the fifth grade of course can do this but simply, but those in the seventh and eighth grades should be able to name characters in various books and compare desirable and undesirable traits; to show the relative values of the qualities they admire. It might conclude in the form of a debate regarding such values.

#### DRAMATIZATION

Dramatization and action of all kinds are not only desirable but necessary to these children. Let them prepare their own stage settings and do much original dramatization of stories they have read, no matter how crude the result. Then help them to profit by the mistakes of previous work. What in the fifth grade may be a crude marionette show with awkward puppets, may become in the seventh and eighth grades an experimental stage for the study of lighting effects, color schemes and stage settings.

#### OUT-OF-DOOR INTERESTS

Interest in outdoor life—birds, flowers, trees, animals, insects—is strong. But the study must be concrete. They wish to talk about what they themselves have seen or are able to see in a preserved state in the class room or museum. Tadpoles brought from the marsh will create much interest

in their growth and might result in an illustrated booklet of class observation.<sup>1</sup> A study of birds found in the neighborhood would include a record of dates when the birds arrived from the south, kinds of trees or bushes in which they nest, types of nests built and possibly construction of bird houses which could be allowed to weather for next year's use. A study of spring and fall flowers should include flower legends, famous flower poems and conservation of wild flowers. Here again is an opportunity to strengthen the group social consciousness. If there are under construction in the neighborhood any streets or highways, sidewalks or large buildings, children's interest is immediately caught. In the upper grades this may lead to a greater understanding of civic responsibilities and activities. While considering outdoor activities, there might also be included experiences in growing a school garden, in beautifying the school grounds, and, in rural districts especially, the discussion of prize entries made by pupils in the county and state fair.<sup>2</sup> This affords an excellent opportunity for deciding upon the merits of the prize calf, corn, jelly, bread, etc., and suggesting improvements to make for next year's entries.

#### GIVING DIRECTIONS

In every classroom are to be found pupils and sometimes teachers who are strangers in the city. Here is a natural situation made to order for much needed practice in giving directions. This may take the form of telling the school nurse how to reach their homes or of pointing out parks, libraries, stations, churches and stores in the

city with instructions as to the easiest way to visit them. In such lessons, stress simplicity and accuracy in the way the directions are given. One teacher who was a newcomer in a certain state, created much lively discussion when she asked the class to explain activities and life foreign to her but most familiar to them.<sup>3</sup> Another natural situation is the introduction of new pupils in the class or of visitors to the school, with talks as to the courtesies one may extend to them.

#### LETTERS

Unfortunately, there is not a class room, but at some time or other has children absent because of illness. To such, letters from one's classmates, telling of school activities, help the dragging hours to pass. In one room, each child prepared a puzzle, joke, short story, poem or drawing; folded it in the shape of a medicine powder and placed it in a box marked "Take one every hour."<sup>4</sup> The mother in that family probably blessed the ingenuity of such a class.

#### CONCLUSION

Upon reflection of the interests under discussion, rich indeed is the heritage of the language teacher in these grades. The children are at an age when they are willing to work toward a goal, to put work before play and to strive for improvement. Their language memory is strong and their interest in the physical world about them unbounded. With a little forethought, it should be no difficult task for the teacher so to enrich each child's experience that it may lead toward a definite goal of greater understanding and service. For experience is the essence of living.

<sup>1</sup> Suggested by Miss Jessie Kyle.

<sup>2</sup> Suggested by Miss Mary E. Hanna.

<sup>3</sup> Suggested by Miss Josephine L. Abel.

<sup>4</sup> Suggested by Mrs. Emma M. Stanley.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HALLOWE'EN\*

**A**UTUMN is a stirring season. It leads householders to move, poets to rhyme about gipsy trails, birds to fly south, and children—alas!—to celebrate Hallowe'en. Boyish enterprise, particularly, rises high at this season, as thousands of soapy windows testify annually. Many an erstwhile Puck becomes a complete hoodlum under the influence of this brisk holiday.

In our unceasing effort to make this world safe for adults, newspapers the country over are accustomed to carry front page stories on Hallowe'en atrocities, accompanied by warnings from the police department, and exhaustive lists of pranks that the civil authorities will not countenance. Such exposés are not only futile, but usually inspire youngsters to enact the mischief described with unusual zest. The responsibility for a law-abiding Hallowe'en rests upon the school, rather than upon the police department, and it may be met successfully in various ways, providing one never loses sight of the axiom that not schools, nor police departments, nor newspaper editorials can change human nature, and that Hallowe'en must be celebrated to the complete satisfaction of all children. Reforms will otherwise be of brief and troubled duration.

All of the grades discuss the duties of citizens. Even the very little people in primary school recall their efforts during clean-up week, and they may be reminded, at Hallowe'en, of their enterprise in helping to pick up papers from the school grounds, and the good citizenship that they showed by taking care to put candy-wrappers in containers, instead of flinging them on the streets. There may follow a dis-

cussion of citizenship, modified according to grade, which will usually resolve into the statement that a good citizen is one who is careful not to make other people unhappy, but who tries, on the other hand, to make everyone around him as comfortable as possible. Examples will be cited, and so the discussion comes to Hallowe'en mischief.

Children will arrive at the conclusion that good citizens play only such pranks on Hallowe'en as will help to make other people happy. The story of the "Elves and the Shoemaker" is frequently told with good effect at Hallowe'en, and "The Goblins of Haubec," by Alberta Bancroft, is also applicable.

The idea of doing good secretly and mysteriously prieks young imaginations into activity. Children enjoy writing papers on such topics as The Mysterious Helper, or, if they are used to the Irish fairy tales, How the Good Little People Helped on Hallowe'en, or, The Fairies in the Kitchen.

It is possible, with the right kind of direction, for pupils even in the third grade to work out a simple play on the theme of secret helpfulness, or they may dramatize such a story as "The Elves and the Shoemaker."

If conviction rises to a pitch that demands it, children may write letters to the local newspaper, pointing out the injustice of destroying property, and causing annoyance, and suggesting more agreeable ways of celebrating Hallowe'en. The best letters may be selected and sent to the newspaper. Children may also prepare talks on this theme, and those whose speeches are most convincing, allowed to stump the school in the interests of a sane Hallowe'en.

Apart from the controversial, the schools may observe Hallowe'en in a number of interesting ways. A dramatization of

\* Compiled from papers submitted in classes on the teaching of English, under Mr. Certain, at the University of Wisconsin Summer School, 1926.

"Tam O' Shanter," or of parts of "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" might be made an interesting project in the upper grades. Variations on ordinary dramatization include shadowgraphs, pantomime, and marionette shows, all of which can be used effectively with these stories.

A recital of ghost stories will send dramatic shivers up youthful spines, if the tales are carefully selected, and well told. Possible bad effects of such stories on nervous, and highly sensitive children must, of course, be forestalled. Accounts of the origin of Hallowe'en customs gives valuable training both in the use of the library for reference, and in organizing and giving talks.

A great many schools have a custom of giving Hallowe'en parties. These, too, serve a double purpose of providing absorbing activity, and furnishing an opportunity for English work. Invitations must be written, and entertainment—dramatizations, story-telling, dancing, charades, or shadowgraphs—worked out.

Whatever the plans, so long as they provide absorbing activity, and so long as convictions are attained by the pupils, and put into effect by them, the Hallowe'en spirit will have an agreeable outlet. It is a season so picturesque, so full of interest to children, and possessed of so many aspects, that a resourceful teacher can turn it to good account in many ways in English training.

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#### ARTHUR CHRISMAN—NEWBERY MEDALIST

(Continued from page 251)

subtleties, enough of the obvious humor remains, and so much of the quaintness and unexpectedness, that juvenile hearers of nine and upwards are delighted with the book.

These folk tales of China lack something of the strangeness, forcefulness, and primitiveness which is possessed by both the style and the subject matter of Mr. Finger's "Tales from Silver Lands." His stories, though originally no more elemental than Mr. Chrisman's, were nevertheless given to him by a people who had not reached the stage of culture attained by

Mr. Chrisman's narrator, and therefore Mr. Finger's stories retain more of their aboriginal qualities. Moreover, Mr. Chrisman's style of telling is more artificial. The effort to be simple is more visible in Mr. Chrisman's style, while Mr. Finger has passed that stage of authorship. This, however, is not in disparagement of Mr. Chrisman's work. Similarity of theme, and the winning of the same prize make comparisons tempting. Mr. Chrisman's stories have a whimsical humor, a quaintness, and an unexpectedness which make the children want "please just one more before bed time!"

## FACTUAL VERSUS STORY-FACTUAL MATERIAL

WILMA LESLIE GARNETT

*The University Elementary School, University of Iowa*

WITHIN the past few years there has been considerable interest taken in the question: Which kind of material is more effective in the teaching of geography and science, *factual material* or *story-factual material*? This question has been asked with particular reference to the teaching of geography and science in the intermediate grades.

Not long ago a parent was heard to say, "Yes, that series of science books is fine for children. My son learns scientific facts without having to think about learning." In this statement can be seen one viewpoint of education, that is, that education should seem to be play to the child. The other viewpoint is that of direct education,—the child learns and is interested in learning because he is having real life contacts and is meeting real situations which he will continue to meet later in life. The second type of education mentioned is the straightforward presentation; the other is somewhat circuitous.

The answering of the above question in any degree of fullness and with satisfaction would need to be backed up by much research. In attempting to find some evidence as a basis upon which to answer a part of the above question, the following experiment was undertaken and carried out under the direction of Dr. Ernest Horn. The experiment was carried on in the University Elementary School, at the State University of Iowa, in the spring of 1925. The experiment was concerned with one phase of the problem only, an answer to the question: Which kind of material is more effective in the teaching of geography, *factual material* or *story-factual material*?

In the problem, as stated, two terms are used which should be defined in order to make clear the meaning that is associated with each in this problem. The terms referred to are *factual material* and *story-factual material*.

By *story-factual material* is meant that type of reading matter that has as its purpose the presentation of facts, but which interweaves those facts with a story. In writing such material, it is obviously the author's purpose to give facts, geographical, historical, or scientific, but to give those facts in what might be termed a sugar coating of story. For example, an author wishes to tell about customs in Japan. He conceives the idea of having some little Japanese twins tell some American children who are visiting in their country of their ways. To cite another case, an author wishing to tell the facts about the production of cotton, has some child from the south explain these facts to an imaginary visitor from the moon. Another device an author may use is to have an uncle or grandfather divulge all the desired information about the raising of wheat to some children who have come to visit the farm for the summer. In each case it is the author's avowed purpose to present facts, but, in doing so, he tries to make them more enticing through some story form of presentation.

The other type of material, the *factual*, offers no apology for presenting facts, but presents them in a straightforward manner. In presenting the facts in this way the author seems to acknowledge that the material is interesting in itself, and that there are many people, even children, who

are desirous of having such material. The author does not write down to the child to intrigue his interest, but offers it with due respect to the intelligence of even young readers.

To summarize these definitions, it appears that these types of material are alike in that they have for their purpose the presentation of facts. They differ in that *factual material* presents facts in a straight-forward expository style, while the *story-factual material* presents the facts mingled in with narrative. The facts are of primary importance in the latter also, the narrative being the thread used to link them together.

To determine which type of material, *factual* or *story-factual*, is more effective for teaching purposes, it was decided to conduct experiments along the following plan.

Grades three, four, five, and six of The University Elementary School, at the State University of Iowa, were chosen for the experiment. Each grade was divided into as nearly equal groups as possible, on the basis of the I. Q. rating on the Stanford Intelligence Test.

Suitable material for testing had to be found and prepared. After looking over many sets of *story-factual material*, two selections were made, one on the subject of "C———" from a certain popular geography reference book, and the other on the subject of "S———" from another popular geography reference book. (The selections will hereinafter be referred to as selection "C" and selection "S.")

Having decided upon the *story-factual* selections, it was necessary to go through each, list the facts carefully, and write the factual selections on the same topics. Care had to be taken to include in the *factual material* every fact given in the corresponding *story-factual material*. It was necessary to give the same facts and those the same number of times in both selections.

For this reason the resulting pairs of articles were of different lengths. This was unavoidable, a condition inherent in the nature of the problem. Because of this unavoidable condition, it seemed possible to call this difference an essential quality. For this reason it was not termed a variable. *Story-factual material* presenting the same facts as *factual material*, and presenting these facts the same number of times must of necessity use more space. An effort was made to keep the vocabulary and phrasing in both types of articles as nearly identical as possible.

Having prepared two sets of material, one on subject "C," and the other on subject "S," a test was next devised to cover each set. A test of twenty questions was devised on selection "C" and another set of twenty questions was devised over selection "S." One test covered the points made in both "C" selections and the other both "S" selections.

The method of procedure in the testing was carried out in the preliminary experiment as outlined below:

1. Each of the four grades used, third, fourth, fifth, sixth was divided into two groups, group A and group B, on the basis of the Stanford Intelligence Test. I. Q.'s were paired against each other to get as equally intelligent groups as possible. There was the same number in each group.

2. Two periods of fifteen minutes each were used on subsequent days for the work in each grade. In each grade on the first day, Group A was given the *story-factual material* on "C" while Group B was given the "*factual material*" on the same subject. After each child had read his material once, he was given the test of twenty questions over the same. The same test was given both groups. The following were the directions given to the children by the conductor of the test after the papers or books to be read had been passed out:

(Materials were passed to children of each group.)

"On your desks you will find a selection of material for reading and a test over the same. Put your name in the upper right-hand corner of the test paper. Under your name place the grade. Under the grade number, place your present age and after it your birthday. On the left-hand side of the paper mark Group A or B. (Conductor distinguishes which the groups are.) Now turn this paper face down and lay it aside until directed to use it again.

"When the signal is given take the material to be read, read your selection through once and lay your paper aside. As soon as you finish reading, take the time for doing so from the board where it will be recorded in half minutes. Mark this time down on the back of your test paper. When you have done this sit quietly and wait for the others to finish. The selections are of different lengths so you may be through much before the others. When all have finished reading, a test of twenty questions will be given you over the material read. You may read when I say, 'Go.' "

3. When all had finished the reading, the test of twenty questions was given with the following directions:

"Lay aside your reading material (close the books or lay the papers face down.) Take the test papers. Write on these papers, after each question, the answers which you recall from your reading. When through turn the paper face down again until the others have finished."

4. After all had finished writing the answers the papers were exchanged and the answers checked as read by the conductor. Children marked number of "rights" and number of "wrongs" on the paper. Papers and material were then collected.

5. On the second day "S" selection was used. For this test the opposite groups were given the "factual" and "story-factual" materials, i.e., whereas Group A

had had "story-factual material" in the "C" selection experiment, this group had the "factual material" in the "S" selection experiment.

In conducting the experiment the second day, the directions were merely reviewed. The rest of the procedure was identical.

At the close of the second day's work the children were asked to tell which material they liked better, the "story-factual" or the "factual." Each child wrote, on the back of the last test paper, which type of material he preferred.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSION

If any general conclusions should be drawn in such a problem from a study comprehending only two lessons and only eighty-four cases, they may be summarized briefly from the foregoing as follows:

1. In presenting the same geographical facts the same number of times through two different articles, one *factual* and the other *story-factual* to two equally intelligent groups in each of the four grades used in the University Elementary School (3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th), the results seem to indicate that neither type of material is more efficacious. There seemed to be almost a balanced result on both the "C" selection and the "S" selection as evidenced by the median as well as the total scores.
2. The efficacy of the material as a medium for teaching geographical facts seems to vary with individuals. For some the *story-factual* material is more effective and for others the *factual* is more so.
3. The time required for reading the *story-factual* material was, of course, greater because of the greater length of the material.
4. As far as preference for the different types of material is concerned, the data is not free from a variable, due to

the fact that the expressed preference may indicate a liking for the subject matter rather than for the type of material. As it stands, however, there was a slight preference expressed for the *story-factual material*, 46 against 34.

5. The better reasons for a preference are given by the children preferring the *factual material*. In almost every case the children preferring the *factual material* are the more earnest, studious children and are the keener thinkers.

**(Grade VI) REASONS FOR PREFERRING  
STORY-FACTUAL MATERIAL**

"I like the story form".  
Understand better  
More interesting form  
Clearer  
Read it more slowly and understand it better.  
Remember it better.  
Lively.  
Not just telling answers.  
Way it is told.  
Understand it better.

**REASONS FOR PREFERRING  
FACTUAL MATERIAL**

"Can't remember facts as well in story form."  
"Story form seems to stop and child asks questions."  
"Doesn't get me confused."  
Briefer.  
"Like a thing that does not monkey around."  
"Understand it better."  
"Find what you want and remember it better."  
Shorter.  
Harder.  
Get better grade.  
"Story factual has the other part of the story and makes a person forget."  
"Does not have so many useless words."

The reasons for liking are more meaningful on the *factual* side. These reasons are given by the children who are the best thinkers in the groups. Perhaps in this fact is one of the most pertinent indications. The children who are the most in earnest and are most studious prefer the *factual* to the *story-factual material*.

**PLAYS AND PAGEANTS FOR ARMISTICE DAY\***

*(Good Will Day)*

**GOOD WILL, THE MAGICIAN.** By Hazel Mackaye. American School Peace League, 405 Marlborough St., Boston, Mass.

**A PAGEANT OF PEACE.** By Beulah Dix. American School Peace League, 405 Marlborough St., Boston, Mass.

**SERVING THE WORLD.** League of Nations Non-Partisan Association, 6 East 39th St., New York City.

**LET'S BE FRIENDS.** By Copenhaver and Cronk. A pageant for young children

built around the idea of children's games. In "Across Borderlines." National Council for the Prevention of War, 532 Seventeenth St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

**BROTHERHOOD THE WORLD OVER.** By the sixth grade of the Lansdowne Friends School. Easy to work out and very effective. National Council for the Prevention of War, 532 Seventeenth St., N. W., Washington, D. C.

\* Selected from a list compiled by the International Relations Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English. E. Estelle Downing, Chairman.

## EDITORIALS

### *Are Children Low Brows?*

MRS. HUBER'S study of children's reading tastes, discussed, in part, in her article, page 258, will be startling to the person who has too complacently accepted schoolroom tradition as the guide to children's reading interests. Actual investigation reveals the wide divergence between children's tastes in reading, and the literature usually provided them in courses of study and textbooks. The investigation, however, has done more than reveal the actual preferences of children: it shows as well, as might be expected, that children's' tastes require careful development. Anyone doubting this should consult the lists, "Rejected Poems," page 260, and "Poems of Highest Scores," page 261.

But one must not assume that the children in any class of 25 or 30 all prefer poetry of the same easy sentimentality. Even in small groups they will vary in their tastes from mediocrity to excellence. It is well enough to know positively that children's tastes have been overestimated in the past—that we have, so to speak, "high browed" the pupils in our schools. But it is necessary also to recognize the danger of acquiescing in "low brow" tastes. We must not, of course, lower our standards to the point of removing good literature beyond the reach of children in the schoolroom.

If one will set aside, for a moment, the question of literary merit, to investigate the list of poems enjoyed most by children, he may find a clue to their preferences. What is there in "Out to Old Aunt Mary's" to attract a child? What does he find in "Darius Green and his Flying Machine" to ensnare his fancy? Is it homely association? Is it nonsensical action? Such questions as these must be answered first, for these questions favor childhood experience. They bring the adult into touch with the associations of child life. Once having discovered these

clues, there is, of course, no excuse for any teacher to offer the child only the mediocre in reading. It is only a matter of further research to find reading of a higher quality—a real literature—that will satisfy the child's interest, and at the same time aid in the cultivation of his taste. Practically, however, the problem is a difficult one, and requires understanding of children, sympathy for them, and the patience to secure exactly what they need.

The question, then, is not "Are children low-brows in their literary tastes?" but "On what plane must the teacher begin in the development of children's literary tastes?" Such studies as Mrs. Huber's indicate definitely two things: first, where the child is, and second, what is needed in his proper development.

### *For Home Reading*

SHEN of the Sea" is full of promise for the "read-at-home" program, page 254. The book had a genuine test by Mrs. Jordan, who reviews it on page 251. When she received the book, Mrs. Jordan said that she meant first of all to read and discuss it with her own boy and girl. The plan was evidently successfully carried out, for we are told that "Shen of the Sea" came in for a great share of family attention, partly because the book fitted wonderfully well into conversation after dinner. The stories seemed just about the right length to be read and talked about.

Although a family group may enjoy "Shen of the Sea" in varying degrees, no story in it is so long as to become tiresome to the one who likes it least, yet long enough to contribute fully to the pleasure of those who really enjoy it. "Shen of the Sea" meets the requirements of any book that is to be successfully read aloud to a family group: it does not demand too much of the family, it readily adjusts itself to time limits, and it does not wear out its welcome.

## REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

*Clarissa Murdoch*

**RAIN ON THE ROOF.** By Cornelia Meigs. New York: Macmillan Co., 1925. 308 pages.

Do you remember the episode in *Sara Crewe*, where Sara, because of her great book-hunger, offers to read to Ermengarde, the dull little rich girl, the books her father sends her, promising to explain what she reads so that there will be no doubt of the meaning?

After the lesson on Robespierre, Ermengarde "was afraid to go to bed and hid her head under the blankets when she did go and shivered until she fell asleep. But afterward she preserved lively recollections of the character of Robespierre, and did not even forget Marie Antoinette and the Princess de Lamballe." Could Sara step from the pages of the book, what a marvelous history teacher she would make!

Miss Meigs is a writer who uses the same splendid approach to history in her books for young people, though, unlike Sara, she does not emphasize gory details. She has several books of distinction to her credit. In *Rain on the Roof* there are five short stories within the story. It is hard to decide which is more pleasing, the main plot or the briefer tales.

The hero is a famous engineer who, while recovering from an injury, keeps his mind and hands occupied by making ship models in the attic of his home in a New England seaport. He makes friends with two boys and a little girl and to them he tells many vivid stories, *The Pilgrims*, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, *The Duke of Gloucester's Men*, and a medieval monk furnishing subjects. Often on the roof there is the gentle patter of the rain as a refrain.

The book is filled with the atmosphere of New England. One can visualize the little winding streets, the old cottages, the coves, and can feel the sting of the salt spray, so vividly does Miss Meigs paint her pictures. It is a superior book.

**MAKESHIFT FARM.** By Hildegard Hawthorne. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1925. 247 pages.

On *Makeshift Farm* by the ocean lived a wholesome family of six children, who had all sorts of good times and escapades too, for they were no goody-goodies. Interest is sustained by a slight mystery, the solving of which forms the plot of the story.

**LITTLE DOG READY AT HOME.** By Mabel F. Stryker. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1925. 205 pages.

For the small readers who loved *Little Dog Ready* the author has written another book telling of his further adventures. The illustrations by Hugh Spencer are in black and white.

**THE INDIANS TODAY.** By Flora Warren Seymour. Chicago: Benj. H. Sanborn & Co., 1926. 225 pages.

Though much has been written about Indians for children the emphasis has been placed upon Indians of the past and their legends. Mrs. Seymour, who is a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners, felt that our boys and girls should know something of the life of the Indians of the twentieth century so she prepared this book. It is profusely illustrated with maps and photographs.

**mighty men from ACHILLES to JULIUS CAESAR.** By Eleanor Farjeon. New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1925. 97 pages.

Here is a companion book to *Mighty Men from Beowulf to William the Conqueror*. The present volume contains tales of the great legendary heroes and one famous heroine, Queen Esther. As in the other book, the author writes a ballad to emphasize each story.

**CAPTAIN SANDMAN.** By Miriam Clark Potter. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926. 233 pages.

To mothers who wish something new in bedtime stories *Captain Sandman* brings gay, sprightly, fresh tales and "little tinkling rhymes." Small faces will glow with excitement as they hear how the mischievous fairy rascals, Slapdash and Slambang annoyed the professor and his wife; how old Mother Bear and her cubs took a ride on a trolley car; how the witch of Windy Hill caught little Barbara Blue.

**GRANNY'S WONDERFUL CHAIR.** By Frances Browne. New York: E. P. Dutton, 1925. 211 pages.

This new edition of a popular story book is illustrated by Katherine Pyle. The full page colored pictures are lovely. The book has been well known for so long a time it hardly seems necessary to speak of its merit. Reading it again, one wonders how the blind poet who wrote it could

give her stories such a vivid background. Each scene is clearly described, with a wealth of word-pictures, which have a great appeal for young children.

**FIREWEED.** By Ethel Cook Eliot. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1925. 311 pages.

Girls who enjoyed *The Vanishing Comrade* will be interested to know that the author has written a new book. This time she tells the story of Crystal, a girl who longs to be an actress. Crystal's friendship with a famous actress, who visits incognito the town where she lives, makes possible the fulfillment of her dreams.

**WONDER TALES FROM CHINA SEAS.** By Frances Jenkins Oleott. New York: Longman's, Green & Co., 1925. 238 pages.

In these stories Old China is reproduced for western children. The author has a great love for the beauty and symbols of Chinese art. She has wisely chosen stories that show China's contribution to the culture of the world.

**THE MIDDLE COUNTRY.** By Olivia Price. Yonkers: World Book Co., 1926. 176 pages.

*The Middle Country* is the sixth volume to appear in *The Children of the World* series. Many books of Chinese folk tales have been published in recent years. This is a story of China today, as seen through the eyes of a ten year old native boy. There are fascinating descriptions of rice fields, tea plantations, festivals of many kinds, a wedding, the theatre, toys, candy vendors—in fact all the every day life of the rich and poor. The illustrations in black and white increase the value of the book. Studying China in geography will be no bug-bear with such an aid at hand.

**JOHNNY AND JENNY RABBITT.** By Emma Serl. New York: American Book Co., 1926. 125 pages.

The two rabbits take part in many frolics which are intensely interesting to first grade children. They swing, skate, go to school, make candy, and play ball, and all of their doings are made more diverting by the illustrations of Ruth M. Hallock. Animals, whether fictitious or real, are invariably fascinating to young children, and Miss Serl has chosen her subject matter wisely. The vocabulary,

as well as the interest, is adapted to the first grade. The book will be welcomed by pupils, as well as by teachers, as a supplementary reader.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READERS.** Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan.

*Red Feather* by Margaret Moreomb, *Red Feather's Adventures* by Jane Curtis Gifford, *Indian Legends* by Joanna Lyback. Teachers who used *Red Feather* in the primary grades will be glad to know that there is now an attractive book, *Red Feather's Adventures*, for the third and fourth grades. *Indian Legends* contains many of the stories told by Indians about their camp-fires. The legends are grouped by states, making the book easy to use in the class-room. The reader is pleasing in appearance and well illustrated in black and white.

**STORIES IN TREES.** By Mary I. Curtis, 1925. 224 pages.

The author has presented fourteen tree legends and also articles telling of the value of trees and the need for conservation. The colored illustrations are by Jewel Morrison. It will be a great aid in preparing Arbor Day programs.

**WHY WE CELEBRATE OUR HOLIDAYS.** By Mary I. Curtis, 1924. 148 pages.

In this reader children may learn of the beginnings of twenty-two holidays. The stories are brief and simply told.

**NEVER GROW OLD STORIES.** Retold from Aesop's Fables by Edwin Osgood Grover, 1925. 144 pages.

This edition has unusually attractive illustrations by Percy Billinghurst.

**STORIES OF BELLE RIVER.** By Bertha Clark, 1925. 204 pages.

Bertha Clark has told just the sort of a story a little girl wants when she says to her grandmother, "Tell me a story about what you did when you were a little girl." It is a simple, interesting chronicle of the doings of an old-fashioned family who lived on a farm in Michigan when life was less complicated than it is now.

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